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Was Ida Lewis a Womanly, or a Manly, Woman? The Ambivalence of a Woman Lighthouse Keeper's Gender Identity Between Masculinity and Femininity

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Abstract

It is obvious that Darling could be mentioned as a most brave woman in doing the heavy labor involved in a lighthouse keeping and even saving shipwrecked people, but it is more particularly worth noting that Ida Lewis's efforts saved the lives of at least eighteen people over a period of twenty-five years. This paper focuses on Ida Lewis, the most famous woman lighthouse keeper in the United States, and analyzes the gender identity of women lighthouse keepers. most studies that discuss women lighthouse keepers point out that, behind women's being appointed as official lighthouse keepers in the nineteenth-century United States, the labor of lighthouse keepers could essentially share common features with the form of femininity that was emphasized in the Victorian era. However, when analyzing from the viewpoint of gender ideology, I cannot help raising questions regarding women lighthouse keepers as examples of mere femininity simply because the labor forms were analogous with household labor. When the labors of lighthouse keeping would be actually recognized as a manly role, can we make a judgement that women lighthouse keepers all endowed feminine traits even when performing the heavy tasks of lighthouse keeping? Moreover, lifesaving, being separable from lighthouse keeping, has been traditionally considered to be "masculine behavior." The aim of this paper is to point out that "femininity" and "masculinity" have been artificially generated, and, as such, are entirely unrelated to an individual's characteristics and abilities. In that light, to deconstruct ideologies of "femininity" and "masculinity," I have chosen to focus on women who have committed to continuing to perform their duties by analyzing the life of Ida Lewis as the most famous woman lighthouse keeper. This has been accomplished by referring to the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service: National Register of Historic Places Inventory for 1897 and some articles about Ida Lewis from 1869 to 1911 as primary sources. Ida Lewis applies simultaneously as among those women who, under the patriarchy, should be confined to the "women's sphere." Furthermore, according to social gender ideology, the life of Ms. Lewis does not necessarily correspond to an individual's abilities and character, as she was able to display the same ability as a man and perform "men's work" in the women's sphere.

Keywords: a woman lighthouse keeper, femininity, masculity, gender ideology, women's sphere

1. Introduction

Grace Darling, a woman lighthouse keeper, became a national heroine and was praised as one of the most famous women in England in the nineteenth century because of her prominent acts of rescue. She died in February 1842, and another woman lighthouse keeper, who would perform greater services in her acts as a rescuer than Grace Darling, came into the world in November of that same year. It is obvious that Darling could be mentioned as a most brave woman in doing the heavy labor involved in a lighthouse keeping and even saving shipwrecked people, but it is more particularly worth noting that Ida Lewis's efforts saved the lives of at least eighteen people over a period of twenty-five years (Cordingly, 2007). This paper focuses on Ida Lewis, the most famous woman lighthouse keeper in the United States, and analyzes the gender identity of women lighthouse keepers. As argued in detail in the next section, most studies that discuss women lighthouse keepers point out that, behind women's being appointed as official lighthouse keepers in the nineteenth-century United States, the labor of lighthouse keepers could essentially share common features with the form of femininity that was emphasized in the Victorian era. However, when analyzing from the viewpoint of gender ideology, I cannot help raising questions regarding women lighthouse keepers as examples of mere femininity simply because the labor forms were

analogous with household labor. When the labors of lighthouse keeping would be actually recognized as a manly role, can we make a judgement that women lighthouse keepers all endowed feminine traits even when performing the heavy tasks of lighthouse keeping? Moreover, lifesaving, being separable from lighthouse keeping, has been traditionally considered to be "masculine behavior." In that light, should we consider that women lighthouse keepers should be also "masculine" rather than "feminine," because they took part in lifesaving actions? All studies about women lighthouse keepers in the nineteenth century have argued from the perspective of women's history in the United States, not from the perspective of gender identity, femininity, and masculinity.

The aim of this paper is to point out that "femininity" and "masculinity" have been artificially generated, and, as such, are entirely unrelated to an individual's characteristics and abilities. In that light, to deconstruct ideologies of "femininity" and "masculinity," I have chosen to focus on women who have committed to continuing to perform their duties by analyzing the life of Ida Lewis as the most famous woman lighthouse keeper. This has been accomplished by referring to the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service: National Register of Historic Places Inventory for 1897 and some articles about Ida Lewis from 1869 to 1911 as primary sources. Ida Lewis applies simultaneously as among those women who, under the patriarchy, should be confined to the "women's sphere." Furthermore, according to social gender ideology, the life of Ms. Lewis does not necessarily correspond to an individual's abilities and character, as she was able to display the same ability as a man and perform "men's work" in the women's sphere.

2. Contradiction of Gender Ideology Expressed by Women Lighthouse Keepers

2.1 Previous Studies' Considerations of the Background of Women Lighthouse Keepers' Appearances

The labor of lighthouse keeping was considered to be a physically and mentally demanding form of work, with it was assumed that only men could do. David Cordingly mentioned some of the heavy labor of lighthouse keepers that was carried out by women, as follows:

In some respects the running of a lighthouse required the sorts of skills traditionally carried out by men; the painting and upkeep of the exterior of the light tower, the repairs to the building and its machinery, the trips to and from in a heavy boat, and the loading and unloading of supplies. But the most essential job, which was tending the light itself, could be carried out by woman just as well as by a man, and indeed there was a historical precedent going back to biblical times for the care of lamps to be a female task. The oil-burning lights that were common in the nineteenth century needed constant attention. Many of them required filling with oil at sundown and again at midnight. In very cold weather, the whale oil that was used tended to congeal, and it was necessary to warm it up on the kitchen stove to enable it to function properly. After lightning the lamp or lamps at sunset, the keeper must trim the wicks at regular intervals: In summer this might need doing only once, around midnight, but in the long winter nights, it was necessary to trim the wicks around ten o'clock at night and again around two in the morning. The light must then be extinguished at sunrise. Women keepers tended to be particularly conscientious about ensuring that the light was functioning properly…During the day, the keeper was kept busy on a continuous round of cleaning and polishing. The prism lens must be kept spotlessly clean and polished, and carbon from the burning lamp must be cleaned off the reflections. And any moving parts must be kept oiled and polished. Whenever sea fog or mist appeared in the vicinity of the lighthouse, the keeper must sound the necessary fog signals until it cleared away" (Cordingly, 2007).

Because of these labor conditions, few women were permitted to be lighthouse keepers and almost all lighthouse keepers were men in nineteenth-century England. Grace Darling could play just a supplementary role of a lighthouse keeper for her father, though not be appointed as an official one (Cordingly, 2007). However, the situation was considerably different in America. Though male keepers were always more common, we have historical records that show many women were permitted to be keepers. Moreover, women would maintain these lighthouses alone through their own efforts, not in auxiliary roles, even if their salaries were lower than those of men. Most scholars recognize that the United States Lighthouse Service accepted women as the primary workforce for lighthouse keeping in the 1800s.

Now why were women adopted as lighthouse keepers in the United States? A number of books and articles have been published that discuss the biographical aspects of some women lighthouse keepers, and there are a few studies that argue the appearances of women lighthouse keepers from the viewpoint of women's history in the United States, such as Margaret C. Adler's "To the Rescue: Picturing Ida Lewis," Bethany Ann Bromwell's Mothers of the Sea: Female Lighthouse Keepers and Their Image and Role within Society, and Virginia Neal Thomas's *Woman's Work: Female Lighthouse Keepers in the Early Republic, 1820–1859*[1]. All of these studies suggest that gender roles at that time had a

[1] The mother-daughter team of Mary Louise Clifford and J. Candace Clifford in Women Who Kept the Lights introduces some women lighthouse keepers' brief biographies from 1776 to 1947. Although this work has been evaluated as a social analysis for lighthouse keeping, it fails to touch the backgrounds in appearances of women lighthouse keepers from the viewpoint of feminism and women's history. Moreover, I can mention some books as follows, which introduce details of

huge effect on the official appearances of women lighthouse keepers in the United States. Considering these suggestions, it can be stated that the ideology of a "sphere" greatly affected women's coming on stage of official lighthouse keepers in the nineteenth-century United States. "Sphere" has been used from the nineteenth century, meaning that men and women play their gender role in their social lives. It is the "women's sphere" that organizes a private life in a household, and "men's sphere" that performs an official life in a working place (Aruga, 2002). It can be stated that the ideology of spheres has doomed "gender roles" for men and women. In Colonial America, a household functioned as a productive unit for living, and members of a family would work together both in the fields and inside houses for producing provisions and the common necessities of life. Although these productive labors would be wholly dominated by fathers, the head of a family, wives could be considered to be important members of the workforce. However, such qualities of family lives began to undergo change around the beginning of the nineteenth century because of the transition to industrialization by the advent of the Industrial Revolution, which means that the concept that a family should be a productive unit for living began to vanish. In other words, productive collaboration between men and women in Colonial America collapsed in the nineteenth century, with the division of productive activities into two domains. Men, who performed productive activities both in the fields and inside houses along with their wives before the Industrial Revolution, had followed a labor system of going to workplaces outside the home to earn their pay. Meanwhile, the understanding that women should be confined in households began gradually to deteriorate. Jeanne Boydston analyzes gender roles and industrialization in *Home and Work*, pointing out that domestic work has been undervalued by industrialization. She describes this phenomenon as the "pastoralization of housework" (Boydston, 1990)[2]. Because of this concept of labor, a family was no longer a ground of production and had become a private space, being the very opposite of official space, which now was industrial workplaces for men. The division of labor according to gender has been justified and endorsed by this concept. A family became a healing space for men who worked hard outside, which demanded "femininity" in the Victorian era and the placement of virtue in obedience, chastity, piety, and self-sacrifice to women, who must serve their family and home (Aruga, 2002).

Almost all previous studies have pointed out that some shared denominators can be found between this ideal image of femininity and the labor of lighthouse keeping, by which women were allowed to be appointed as official lighthouse keepers. Although it was almost impossible for most women to come into the workforce, lighthouse keeping occupied a different niche than other occupations (Bromwell, 2008; Thomas, 2010). Because lighthouses, which should be workplaces, and families as a safe place to occupy were unified, it became possible for the labor of lighthouse keeping to function as a productive unit, which prevented men from going outside for getting salaries. In other words, the labor of lighthouse keeping could be family-operated in the same manner as farm administrations, which allowed women to participate in working along with men. A lighthouse could be considered to be a private space as well as an official workplace. David Cordingly pointed out that "this was a fairly typical arrangement, because the running of a lighthouse was often regarded as a family concern and in some respects was rather like running a farm or a family store" (Cordingly, 2007). All members of a family took responsibility for domestic duties and the condition of their lighthouses, a system that was permitted by the government because of its benefits. Therefore lighthouse keepers represented a clear departure from ordinary wage labor, which meant that when women were appointed as lighthouse keepers and received a salary, it could be admitted as domestic duties in real time. Virginia Neal Thomas suggests that it became possible to understand the implication of lighthouse keeping as women's work by association with women's status at home and cultural factors in the nineteenth century (Thomas, 2010).

Moreover, it can be pointed out that not only was there a working force at home but also some coincidences between

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some women lighthouse keepers, but though without analyzing these from a feminist perspective: David Cordingly, Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways, and Sailors' Wives (Random House, 2007); Joan Druett, She Captains: Heroines and Hellions of the Sea (Simon & Schuster, 2000).

[2] I can mention some studies, which focus on women and work, as follows, and like Boydston's suggestion, almost all of them suggest that women have been confined in households and compelled to occupy subordinate positions by division of labor according to gender, and "femininity' has become an essential factor in this system of male dominance: Berbara Welter, "The Cult of Womanhood, 1820–1860" in American Quarterly 18-2 (Summer 1966), 151–174: Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges" in Feminist Studies 3-1 (Autumn 1975), 5–14; Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); Ava Baron, Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Wendy Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in History" in Business History Review 72-2 (Jul. 1998), 188–217; Rosemarie Zagarri, Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2007); Wilma A. Dunaway, Women, Work and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

lighthouse keeping and an ideal image of femininity behind the appearance of women lighthouse keepers (Adler, 2014). Although lighthouse keeping was meant to be a male-dominant labor, the spirit of dedication, which should be essential for lighthouse keepers, required obedience, self-sacrifice, and patience, all of which were considered to be natural qualities for women. In the nineteenth century, domestic duties for women came to include defending their families and homes and childbearing and were given importance in the sense of forming American citizens, and the behavior of keeping lighthouses could be viewed as a continuation of it. Despite the fact that most women were excluded from almost all wage labors, the US Treasury Department and Lighthouse Board appointed more than 122 women as official lighthouse keepers from 1828 to 1913, and perhaps we can find more women, who served as unofficial ones (Clifford and Clifford, 2000; Bromwell, 2008)[3].

2.2 Analysis of Women Lighthouse Keepers' Gender Identity by Their Working Environment

Both Bromwell and Thomas, who analyzed the background for any appearances of women lighthouse keepers, conclude that the labor of lighthouse keeping supported women's social advancement. These scholars insist that while their engagements as a lighthouse keeper were brought about by their family member's deaths, they became able to achieve economic and social independence by continuing their late husbands' work. However, is there truth in their assertions? In fact, we can derive an opposite structure from the appearance of women lighthouse keepers. Employment as official lighthouse keepers did not promote women's full participation in society but, in the Victorian era, took advantage of women's inspiration to follow an ideal image of femininity. In other words, it was emphasized that women could not work outside the home so they had no choice but to work inside their houses. The most important point is that all of the women lighthouse keepers that have been mentioned in almost all previous studies had taken over the positions after the deaths of their husbands, or fathers (Thomas, 2010). That is to say, there have been no previous cases of a woman who was a total stranger to lighthouses successfully attaining a position as an official lighthouse keeper for herself. Even Ida Lewis, the most famous woman lighthouse keeper, became one by taking over from her father. From the United States Lighthouse Service's standpoint, we can easily understand that there were some advantages to appointing bereaved wives or daughters as lighthouse keepers. Because they shared a home with their husbands or fathers, lighthouse keepers, and assisted them, they could be useful lighthouse keepers without special training. It is easily understood that the United States Lighthouse Service just took advantage of the fact that a lighthouse as a workplace was an integrated combination of a home with a workplace, exploiting women whose dead husbands or fathers were lighthouse keepers.

All previous studies have just clarified this background, without being able to conclude that women lighthouse keepers could be pioneers for gender equality in labor.

The first study about the idea of a "women's sphere" is *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780–1835* by Nancy Cott, and after her study, women's history in the United States has been developed in line with the women's sphere (Aruga, 2002)[4], which caused previous studies about women lighthouse keepers to have a conventional idea of "sphere," neglecting their gender ideology.

Now, were women lighthouse keepers in the United States simply exploited by the United States Lighthouse Service? Of course the answer should be "no." When we turn our attention to women lighthouse keepers, it soon becomes apparent that they deserve special notice for analysis from the viewpoint of gender consciousness, not of women's

[3] The first woman to be appointed as a lighthouse keeper was Hannah Thomas. She held this position from 1775 to 1790. After her, until 1828, there are no records for official women lighthouse keepers (Clifford and Clifford, 2000; Bromwell, 2008). As I mentioned in this paper, there were as many as 122 women as official lighthouse keepers from 1828 to 1913, among whom the Cliffords biographically adopt 25 as the most remarkable: The mother-daughter team of Mary Louise Clifford and J. Candace Clifford, *Women Who Kept the Lights: An Illustrated History of Female Lighthouse Keepers* (Alexandria: Cypress Communications, 2000).

[4] I can mention these books as studies of sphere ideology : Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" in *Signs* 1-1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29; Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986); Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, female Worlds, Women's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History" in *the Journal of American History*, 75-1 (Jan. 1988), 9-39; Linda K. Kerber, Nancy F. Cott, Robert Gross, Lynn Hunt, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Christine M. Stansell, "Beyond Roles, Beyond Spheres: Thinking about Gender in the Early Republic" in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 46-3 (1989), 565-585; Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); Zagarri, "Women and Party Conflict in the Early Republic" in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004), 107-128; Mary Kelley, Learning to Stand & Speak: Women, *Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006);

history, though it also should be that the question arises whether they have contributed to women's social advancement. Rather, we have to notice that women lighthouse keepers exhibit a combination of the ideal feminine qualities of obedience, chastity, piety, and self-sacrifice along with the ideal masculine qualities of bravery and strength. It is easy to presume that men lighthouse keepers relied on their wives solely for housekeeping, doing the work of lighthouse keeping themselves. However, it should be remembered that women lighthouse keepers who took over the work after the deaths of their husbands or fathers had to balance their lighthouse work and household responsibilities. In such a situation, women were able to take over the labors of lighthouse keeping because it could ensure compatibility between official and domestic labor for women. To put it another way, women lighthouse keepers, who had to be responsible for both official labor and domestic labor, had to be hard both physically and mentally, which means that they would have been unqualified for the work if their personalities did not combine both feminine and masculine qualities.

We can clarify that women lighthouse keepers are worthy of remark as seafaring women by considering their positions in daily lives as lighthouse keepers, not from the viewpoint of women and labor in women's history. Women lighthouse keepers, who had to act in capacities of both male and female, can be recognized as a perfect example of showing inner strength. Furthermore, we can more strongly emphasize their "independence." Because most lighthouses, which were also their houses, were located in remote areas, these women lived in social isolation (Adler 77–78), which leads to the assumption that they were forced to follow a self-sufficient lifestyle. Women lighthouse keepers, managing household affairs, keeping lighthouses, and managing any difficulties with both physical and mental strengths, were endowed with both the ideal feminine qualities of obedience, chastity, piety, and self-sacrifice, as well as the masculine virtue of being trustworthy.

3. Gender Ideology in the Nineteenth Century and Gender Identity Expressed through Women Lifesavers

Although the workplace and home were directly involved in the labor of lighthouse keeping, not all of the related work was always carried out in the keeper's home. As evidenced by the example of Grace Darling, lifesaving activities such as rescuing the victims of shipwrecks were included in the labor of lighthouse keeping. Rowing a boat in rough waters and saving people from drowning required physical strength and, of course, a good command of swimming. These behaviors are not satisfied only by being endowed with ideal femininity. Rather, the strength equivalent of men would be absolutely essential. Of course, it is a fact that not all women lighthouse keepers were always involved in rescue efforts, and perhaps only a few women did so (Bromwell, 2008). However, it is also true that in the United States Ida Lewis played a crucial part in rescuing many of the survivors of shipwrecked vessels.

As the article "The Passing of Ida Lewis" in *The New York Times* dated October 29, 1911 states, "She was made a lighthouse keeper as a recognition of her heroism, and it is as a brave woman and not as the first woman to hold a certain position that she shines." Ida Lewis has attracted a lot of attention because she saved many people from drowning, not because of her position as a lighthouse keeper. Therefore, the gender identity of a woman lighthouse keeper should be considered exclusive of the background of their appearance in women's history.

3.1 Ida Lewis as a Lifesaver Reported in Newspapers in the Nineteenth Century

Of course, without a doubt Grace Darling was a brave woman because of her heavy onboard labor and rescue, but frankly speaking, her achievement is not as great as that of Ida Lewis, an American lighthouse keeper who was involved in many rescue efforts. Idawalley Zorada Lewis was born the eldest daughter of Captain Hosea Lewis in Rhode Island, Newport, in 1842. Her father was appointed as the lighthouse keeper of Lime Rock Light in 1853, but he was not able to fulfil his duties because he was struck down by a heart attack. On behalf of her father, Ms. Lewis and her mother tended the Lime Rock Light from 1857 until 1873, when he died. After his death, her mother was then appointed keeper, although Ida continued to do the keeper's work[5]. By 1877 her mother's health was failing, leaving Ida with increased housekeeping and care-giving responsibilities. Her mother eventually died of cancer in 1878. Ida finally received the official appointment as keeper in 1879.

Established in 1854 at the southern entrance to Newport Harbor, Ida Lewis Rock Light is significant for its association with a noted keeper, Ida Lewis. During much of the 54 years she lived at the. light, Lewis received national publicity for her numerous rescues of people stranded in overturned boats in Newport Harbor… Captain Hosea Lewis, the light's first keeper, took up residence with his family at Lime Rock on July 29, 1858. Six months later, Captain Lewis was paralyzed by a stroke which left him a complete invalid. Thereafter, his wife and fourteen-year-old daughter Ida, took over the duties of tending the light.（United States Department of the Interior National Park Service: National Register of Historic Places Inventory, 1897）

The National Register of Historic Places mentions Ida Lewis, recording that she became a national heroine for her

[5] According to Cliffords Zoraida Lewis, Ida's mother, was appointed as the head keeper between 1872 and 1879.

rescue efforts. Ida saved the lives of eighteen people during the fifty-four years when she held the position, officially and unofficially, as a lighthouse keeper. In addition, this number was officially recorded, so it can be estimated that she saved as many as twenty-five people in actual fact (Adler, 2014)[6].

Ida Lewis's first rescue effort that made her an admirable heroine took place in September of 1859, when she was eighteen. Four college students went out in a boat after dark, and their boat capsized. One of them was able to climb up the mast, but the others could not swim. Ida heard their shouts, and she immediately launched a boat and set off toward them. She later said that by the time she reached them they were "two-thirds dead—awfully weak and white-faced, and almost inanimate" (Cordingly, 2007)[7].

Her last act of rescue, which was recorded in National Register of Historic Places as "the most famous," took place in 1869. She engaged in two rescue efforts this year; one was the rescue of a shepherd, the other was the rescue of two soldiers. "The latter should be notably remarkable. According to records, she rushed into a roiling sea to bring two Fort Adams soldiers to safety. The soldiers clung to their capsized boat, their young hired pilot having already perished in the gale. Ida Lewis's mother caught sight of the wreck and summoned her daughter to their aid. She has no shoes upon her feet, no hat upon her head, no outer garment to protect her slight figure from the storm. A towel is hastily seized and knotted loosely about her neck, and her stocking clad feet are bruised by the sharp rocks and stones, as she speeds her way to the ever-ready boat" (Brewerton, 1869)[8]. This act of rescue established a strong reputation for her (Adler, 2014). Many newspapers, such as *Harper's Weekly, Frank Leslie Illustrated,* and *The New York Times*, wrote about her rescue exploits, in part because, in the nineteenth century, boating disasters happened so frequently that the act of rescuing was absolutely essential. Rescuers' activities, most of which were performed by males, were put on spectacular display in newspapers and paintings. The cultural assumption was that lifesaving should be masculine work. At the same time, it was common ideology that rescuees should be fragile females (Adler, 2014). While it was considered natural that a hero who was involved in lifesaving should be male, a rhetoric had been established that a female must be dependent, need relief from a male, and could survive without his protection. It was understood as the very principle of masculine individualism that a male protects a female from dangerous conditions (Mitchell-Cook, 2011; Miskolcze, 2007). In the time when this ideology was widespread, there would have been a potential for raising fundamental doubts about existing gender ideology in reporting on the great deeds of Ida Lewis. It can be easily presumed that it was extremely difficult to report her accomplishments in newspapers without sacrificing femininity. Publishing articles on Ida Lewis's strength and femininity with no inconsistencies was a challenge for each newspaper. How could the articles about Ida Lewis report her bravery and strength without sacrificing her femininity in an age of full ideology of predominance of men over women? How could the articles in those days report her as both a brave lifesaver and an exemplar of femaleness?

What is very interesting in articles about a lifesaver's accomplishments is that while they put the whole emphasis on masculine bravery and drew little attention to individual qualities in the case of a male rescuer, they particularized an individual's features in the case of a female[9]. And, more interestingly, "womanly pursuits" were emphasized in female lifesavers rather than any departure from femininity. Such is the case with the articles about Ida Lewis. An article in the *New York Times* dated January 27, 1878, reports as given below:

…it is thought by many persons that such service and bravery as hers should have some public recognition. Her last rescue ways of United States soldiers, who were attempting to reach Fort Adams in a storm. Miss Lewis is a cheery,

[6] The following books mentions Ida Lewis as a lighthouse keeper in a biographical interpretatio ; George D. Brewerton, *Ida Lewis, the Heroine of Lime Rock* (Newport: Ward, 1869); Phebe A. Hanaford, *Women of the Century* (Boston: Russell, 1877); Joan Druett, *She Captains: Heroines and Hellions of the Sea* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Lenore Skomal, *The Keeper of Lime Rock: The Remarkable True Story of Ida Lewis, American's Most Celebrated Lighthouse Keeper* (Philadelphia: Running, 2002) ; David Cordingly, *Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways, and Sailors' Wives* (New York: Random Houses, 2007) ; Lenore Skomal, The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter: The Remarkable True Story of American Heroines Ida Lewis (Guilford: Globe Pequet, 2010)

[7] Her first rescue was mentined as "her first rescue" in an article of New York Times dated 10 25, 1911, entitled "Ida Lewis, Heroine of Lime Rock, Dies."

[8] The detail of her rescue work appeared in an article of The Hays free press, December 16, 1911, entitled "Grace Darling of America—The Only woman to Hold a Commission From the Government in her Work."

[9] Margaret C. Adler points out that masculinity in lifesaving has been especially described in some paintings (Adler 75–76). Adler mentions *The Life Line* by Winslow Homer, suggesting that a gender rhetoric has been established in lifesaving that a male is the one who should rescue and a female is the one who should be rescued. While masculinity in rescuing is fully expressed without features in *The Life Line* (Foster 2).

contented little woman, who asks nothing for herself, and has never courted the fame or attention she has receive. ("Ida Lewis," 1911)

While her bravery and strength could be emphasized by reporting her rescue work for the soldiers in this article, her femininity was also highlighted in it at the same time. In other words, it is emphasized that Ida Lewis could be fragile and modest, that is, she has the virtues of a female. Moreover, her bravery and femininity were expressed with balance in an article of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* dated November 5, 1881, by emphasizing her sympathy for the victims of boating disasters.

The freedom of the life, however, and the constant abundance of stimulating sea air, together with the exercise of rowing to and from the city, gave Ida a physical strength and a health which makes her richer in all the valuable part of life than many of sex whose lives are passed in constant repining for something to live for, while surrounded with all the appliance of luxury. That Ida Lewis has also developed an independence of courage is shown by her life has not in any way prevented the development of the tenderness of sympathy with suffering which is supposed to be peculiar to only the helplessness of women. ("The Nation's Tribute to the Heroine of Lime Rock," 1881)

Presses at that time succeeded in increasing their sales rather than receiving criticism by reporting stories of female lifesavers, although at a time when common sense had established that lifesaving should be males' works. Perhaps Ida Lewis's high praise might have resulted not only from sincere admiration, but also from a need to point out her uniqueness.

What was important in reporting the activities of male lifesavers was emphasizing an ideal male figure with maximized emphasis on the essence of rescue efforts, so that it was needless for the reporter to give the details of an individual's identity, such as features or characteristics. That was sufficient to convey the news that a strong and reliable man had rescued a fragile woman. However, the total opposite prevailed in the case of female lifesavers. As I have mentioned above, unlike males, they were reported in terms both of their brave activities and their individual identities. Of course, the prominence and notability of female lifesavers could not be missed because of their small numbers, but that was not all. When reporting male lifesavers, there was no need to be ingenious because presses could directly convey their innate bodily strength.

However, in the case of a female lighthouse keeper, newspapers could not possibly report her as strong as a male counterpart. Therefore it was absolutely essential for them to report her individual identity in detail by taking advantage of photographs and illustrations as well as written descriptions in order to convey her both as an excellent lifesaver and as a female possessing ideal femininity, whose lifesaving action must have been an act of desperation[10].

In other words, the act of lifesaving had different meanings according to gender. We can see the concept of inversion at work in the labor of lifesaving, that is, although it should be taken to symbolize masculinity, it could be turned into a symbolization of femininity. The mass media entirely emphasized the self-sacrificing spirit of women lifesavers rather than their bravery and strength, which were meant to impress on readers that female lifesavers possessed ideal femininity, obedience, chastity, piety, and self-sacrifice. As a result, a strange phenomenon occurred, by which female lifesavers appeared in newspapers on the opposite side of male lifesavers, although performing the same act of lifesaving. In the nineteenth century, patriarchal gender ideology was so pervasive that it was impossible for the mass media to print articles that contradicted the ideology. This very phenomenon can give an evidence of the gender bias of the time.

3.2 Delusion about Gender Conception of Lifesavers

"Ida Lewis, America's Grace Darling, Ill" in *The New York Times* dated October 22, 1911, reports on Ida Lewis as follows:

Ida had the care of an invalid family on her hands. She was the oldest child and in order that her sisters and brothers might have proper schooling she rowed them back and forth to the lighthouse every day. When her brother was taken ill in 1885 she watched over him night and day. He was taken ill at the lighthouse, but died on shore. Her sister, a lovely girl, died at the lighthouse after a brief illness, that same year. Her mother was incapacitated from work. All the

[10] A photographic technique had been developed the by 1860s, so that carte-de-visite became fashionable. People took pleasure in carrying around pictures of the respected and famous persons as well as those of themselves (Adler 84–85). Ida Lewis could be considered to be one of the respected persons whose photographs should be carried around. She could have been viewed as a woman who had an ideal femininity, being the very woman who enhanced national pride. Because her photographs were distributed in large quantities, it was effective to run her feminine photographs in newspapers. See "Ida Lewis - The Newport Heroine" in *Harper's Weekly*, July 31, 1869.

household work, as well as her official duties, fell on her. ("Ida Lewis, America's Grace Darling, Ill," 1911)

This article conveys what she has had to go through in supporting her family. She undoubtedly had a lot of duties to perform for her family members: she must have taken responsibility for rowing her younger sister and brothers to school; and she must have taken care of her sick family members. According to this article, because her mother was weak and unreliable, she must have kept house while working as a lighthouse keeper. It is undoubted that the purpose of this article was to convey that she was an ideal woman without departing from the women's sphere. However, her positions of both a housekeeper and a lighthouse keeper imply that these conditions were tougher on her emotionally and physically than on men. Contrary to the article's purpose, the article unwittingly shows that Ida Lewis herself simultaneously possessed femininity and masculinity. What is important is that when considering acts of lifesaving in light of the women's sphere, which required women to sacrifice a great deal for family members, it opens up the possibility that saving a life, which has been considered to be masculine behavior, actually turns out to have been feminine at the same time. Saving a life can fit within the concept of the women's sphere because lifesavers have to put their own life at risk to save others' lives, fulfilling a woman's requirement to sacrifice herself for her family. This can be just as valid for male lifesavers. To put it a different way, even if a male lifesaver physically possesses a male body, there should be a feminine nature in him, a lifesaver, in the sense that the behavior of saving others can be vested in the women's sphere. To corroborate this concept, I cite an article in *The New York Times* dated October 22, 1991, as follows:

At the presentation of a medal to Ida Lewis in October, 1881, ex-Gov. Van Zandt of Rhode Island said it was no hyperbole to say, even after the later war had made acts of heroism familiar, that no one had ever shown more womanly heroism or a more real, genuine, Christian love of mankind than this kind, modest, self-sacrificing woman. （Ida Lewis, America's Grace Darling, Ill," 1911 ）

Although fighting wars has been considered more masculine behavior than that of saving lives, this article implies that even wars require "womanly heroism," which contains modesty and self-sacrifice. This article shows that though almost all soldiers in wars have been males, self-sacrifice has also been demanded of them, which required that "womanly heroism" was to be inspired in them.

What becomes apparent through the act of lifesaving is that femininity and masculinity are not two opposite natures but mutually connected like the two sides of a coin. Both male and female lifesavers actually performed the same behavior, however hard newspapers made efforts to emphasize the femininity. It is a fact that regardless of lifesavers' gender, they were always on hand to save others. Moreover, it is also a fact that female lifesavers were as brave and reliable as male ones. At the same time, they were the nineteenth century's ideal females practicing self-sacrifice, as the newspapers reported. After all, whether it was saving lives or supporting family members, they were no different from those males who had been on the side of saving others. Furthermore, bodily strength is an essential quality required just for lifesavers. Even without lifesaving, as I mentioned in the previous section, the labor of a lighthouse keeper would have required bodily strength. The more the articles in newspapers were fully aware of gender ideology in reporting lifesaving, the more it became apparent that correlating an occupation of lifesaving with gender stereotypes was nonsensical. While it was accepted as common sense that males, the best prospects for saving females, were recognized as being strong, this concept was based on the belief that the behavior of saving others itself was strong. That is, whether a saver was male or female, it should draw attention to the simple fact that saving others itself required strength. Because Ida Lewis must have been aware of the value in saving the lives of others, it is difficult to think that she had any intention of behaving either as a male or a female. She just happened to be a female in biological sex. In other words, the concept that the behavior of lifesaving is strictly masculine can be seen as an illusional stereotype.

Ida Lewis's activity as a lifesaver, which raised questions about the already-existing nineteenth-century gender ideology, naturally had an impact on the women's suffrage movement in the latter nineteenth century. However, her activity was to keep a distance from the rhetoric of the movement. Ida Lewis's behavior proved women could be endowed with bravery and strength, although these were socially restricted by gender. Elizabeth Stanton, a central figure of the women's suffrage movement in nineteenth-century America, gave her attention to Ida Lewis's accomplishments. Stanton's assertion was not that it was essential for women to obtain suffrage in order for them to have energetic activities but that women had already accomplished great deeds not far behind those of men, based on the example of Ida Lewis and other women (Stanton 129). The fact that it was possible for Ida Lewis to become an example of women's abilities was evidence that suffrage was refused to women because of mere legal issues, not their abilities.

4. Deconstructing the Gender Ideology of Female Lighthouse Keeping

Ida Lewis drew attention and was highly applauded for her achievements, as was Grace Darling. It was reported in "Ida Lewis, America's Grace Darling, Ill," an article in *The New York Times* dated October 22, 1911, that Ida Lewis was honored with a great many prizes. A silver medal from the New York Life Saving of Association, one from the

Massachusetts Human Society, and a gold medal from an act of Congress in recognition of the rescues were her most treasured prizes, while she was especially proud of a silver pot from Fort Adams. Moreover, "in 1907 she received from the American Cross of Honor Society at Washington its cross of honor and membership in the order" ("Ida Lewis, America's Grace Darling, Ill," 1911).

Like Grace Darling, Ida Lewis became a national heroine in the twentieth century, but unlike Darling, who died at twenty-six, Lewis lived to the age of sixty-nine. Her death was recorded in the National Register of Historic Places as follows:

On October 14, 1911, Ida Lewis died at the age of 69 after having lived at Lime Rock for fifty-three years and serving as its keeper for thirty-four years. After her death the light was officially renamed Ida Lewis Rock Light.（United States Department of the Interior National Park Service: National Register of Historic Places Inventory, 1897）

However, *The New York Tines* reported that it was on October 24, 1911, that Ida Lewis passed away. We can guess that the record in the National Register of Historic Places was correct because of its official nature, but there is no way to know why the newspaper reported the conflicting date. What is apparent is that the newspaper attached enough value to her death to run articles about Ida Lewis for one successive week after October 22 when she had fallen ill (although according to the National Register of Historic Place's record, she had already died on that day)[11].

It is impossible to erase the conjecture that if Ida Lewis had been a male, she would not have been praised by the whole nation. In other words, it is nothing more or less than her gender that allowed her to gain prestige. A female, who participated in a male-dominant domain and distinguished herself there enough to put a man to shame, often became the focus of public attention. In this sense, it can be suggested that Ida Lewis happened to achieve the benefits of her gender. However, it is not important at all in regard to what we can grasp from the story of Ida Lewis. We must note that it is absurd that human nature and behavior are decided by sex because sex can be considered to be biologically fixed, but gender is flexible and depends on individual characteristics. The example of Ida Lewis can function as an example of this. Regardless of her gender and being unaware of it, she completed her work as a lifesaver, possessing both feminine and masculine qualities.

For instance, Hannah Snell refused her gender and disguised herself as a man to escape into manhood, which had the ironic result of emphasizing her femininity. I argued that the more she behaved with courage, the more her natural gender was highlighted in contradiction to her will. The case of Ida Lewis could be considered as the reverse of Hannah Snell's. Ida Lewis never deliberately behaved in a way to become a male. It is apparent that what she entirely intended to do was to concentrate on saving others' lives. That is, acting bravely is not a matter of gender, and of course cannot be provoked by one's choice of clothing. The cross-dressing of Anne Bonny and Mary Read was not to disguise their own gender but to be suitable for fighting rather than dressing as women. While Ida Lewis did not dress as a man anytime or anywhere, she has something in common with Bonny and Read in accepting her own gender. One radical factor common to them is the willingness to meet their role to perform.

Both lighthouse keeping and lifesaving were among the toughest of jobs, requiring bodily strength. Therefore both acts of labor have been recognized as belonging to male-dominant areas because of stereotypes of masculinity and strength. But I have already argued that even a male lighthouse keeper or a lifesaver was required to possess a feminine nature, in the sense of a self-sacrificing spirit. The example of female lighthouse keepers demonstrates that bravery and strength do not belong just to males, nor do self-sacrifice, patience, and obedience apply just to females, but inhere in both sexes. The labor of lighthouse keeping can function as completely deconstructing an existing gender ideology and stereotype.

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